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BY CAVIS & TRIMMIER.

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From the Ladies' Repository.

Deacon Palmer's Family.

The sound of the stage horn flowed in sweet mournful currents in and out of the hollows, and the echoes among the hills caught them up and tossed them back and forth through the forest, and they ran in long, silvery eddies up the turnpike, and over the meadows, and across the orchards, till they reached the ears, and stirred the hearts of the quiet little village of Woodstock, whose farm-houses sat in the valley at the foot of a long chain of hills, like a company of pilgrims gathered to worship before the shrine of a vast temple. It was just at sunset, and somehow those long, mournful minor tones seemed the fitting close of the day's service—that autumn day which had arisen on the mountain in garments of sunshine, and marched through the hours in beauty and rejoicing, a living "Glory to God!" the Creator of its good and perfect gift.

But it was a day fraught with dread and foreboding to thousands of homes and hearts in the land, for the voice of war was abroad in the earth, and mothers had strained their brave sons for the last time to their bosoms, and seen them go forth to battle, and husbands and fathers had laid aside the plow and the scythe, and shouldered their muskets, and taken their lives in their hands for the sake of freedom, and in the name of the God of battles.

So deep shadows lay on the quiet country thresholds of almost every home in New England that autumn day, and almost every hearth-stone was an altar where anxious, loving hearts sent up a cry to God for their beloved. Mrs. Palmer, wife of Deacon John Palmer, of Woodstock, stood in the wide, old-fashioned kitchen of the dingy, yellow farm house, which she brought her husband on her marriage morning. She was an ample, motherly, pleasant-faced woman, whose whole physiognomy corresponded with the room. Strings of red peppers and rows of dried apples were festooned along the ceiling, while a swinging-board, fastened to a beam which divided the hall overhead, was burdened with herbs and berries, hams, dried beans, seeds, and a motley variety of domestic wares.

Mrs. Palmer's life had slipped over its fiftieth summer, and her black hair was thickly sifted with gray, and there were lines about her forehead, and the smile in her faded eyes had something sorrowful about it, for Mrs. Palmer had walked with grief many times; and of the ten fair boys and girls who had been gathered to her maternal heart, only two remained to her old age. It was a small family under the roof of the old gray homestead on earth, but a larger one in that golden upper homestead whose blessed threshold is never darkened by the shadow of death.

Mrs. Palmer paused as her ear caught the faint sweet echoes of the stage horn, and she deposited half a dozen freshly-boiled doughnuts in the pan on the table, murmuring to herself, "Now, for all the world, if that isn't the mail coming in! Who knows but what there may be some news from Reuben?" Ah! if you had heard how her voice lingered over the name, you would have known she was his mother.

"I wonder if that boy'll take any sort of care of himself," continued the fond mother, dexterously convolving several strips of dough and placing them in the large iron kettle which hung over the fire filled with boiling fat, which indignantly snapped and sputtered at their intrusion.

"If there was a fray, he'd be sure to be foremost, for he al'ays was poking his head into all sorts o' danger, and never seemed to feel quite so content as when there was a chance o' getting his neck off his shoulders.

"I never could exactly see where he got his harum-scarum turn, for his father was al'ays a sober-minded man; but it was amazin' how he'd be sartin to come out straight. I never had an easy hour for the first ten years of his life, for fear he'd be brought home with broken limbs; but arter he'd gone through with what would kill a dozen ordinary children, I kinder gave up. I concluded he bore a charmed life.

"Bless his heart! my brave, handsome boy never gave his mother a cross word in the world; and I saw the tears a shinin' under his lashes that mornin' when he kissed me good-by, afore he started for the army, though he talked so bold and cheery about his coming back a cap'n or a colonel.

"Poor fellow! I hope he won't get the rheumatis campin' out at night, and they say they have to put up with fare such as we wouldn't have the face to offer to a smart dog. I wish I could do up a paper o' these doughnuts for the boy, he al'ays was fond of 'em. Dear me! them cakes are burnin," dipping her large tin ladle into the boiling fat; "but it al'ays flustrates me when I get to thinking o' Reuben.—I'm reminded sometimes o' what Parson Hunter said to me: 'Miss Palmer, you musn't make an idol of your son. He belongs to the Lord.' I know it's true as Scriptur', but I can't help thinkin' the Lord'll show marcy on my weakness, cos he's all I've got, and after a great many struggles I've given up the others to Him; but my very life is bound up in that boy, and if anything should happen to him, God knows it would break his poor old mother's heart." And Mrs. Palmer broke down here, and she sat down on the old oaken chest, and wiped her eyes on the corner of her check apron.

Light warblings of some old psalm tune fluttered down the staircase, and then the door opened and a pleasant looking girl burst suddenly into the room.

Rebecca Palmer was twenty-two, and the sight of her bright young face was like a picture rejoicing the eyes. She was not beautiful, but her cheeks were full of the glow of youth, and the richness of perfect health.

"Well, child," said Mrs. Palmer, taking her kettle from the crane, "you just bustle round spry and get up supper. Your father and the men will come home clear tuckered out, for they've been fellin trees all day, and we must get a hearty meal for 'em. You slice up some ham, too, and fry a dozen eggs, while I fix up some short cake."

"Mother, did you hear the stage horn?" asked Rebecca, as she laid the cloth she had spun with her own hands for the supper.

"Yes, and I was kind of impressed there was news from Reuben."

"I wonder what keeps father so?" remarked Rebecca.

Likely as not he's gone round to the tavern, to learn if there's any tidings from the army."

Another half-hour throbbed itself away in the pulses of the great old-fashioned clock in the corner, and both the women had begun to grow alarmed at the deacon's prolonged absence, when they caught the click of the gate latch, and his heavy tread along the footpath.

They saw him stop, as usual, at the woo'en trough at the well, and wash his hands there, and then he came into the kitchen.

"Why, father," began Mrs. Palmer, with a little wifely admonition, "what has kept you so long? I ra'ly began to be scared about you."

"And the supper's about burnt to cinders," added Rebecca, who was in something of a hurry to get the table cleared in time for singing school.

The deacon was a square-built, sun-browned man, with shaggy eye-brows and weather-beaten face. He came toward the table with a slow groping movement, which neither of the preoccupied women noticed, and he cleared his throat twice before he spoke.

"I was detained a spell on some matter of my own;" and Mrs. Palmer and Rebecca at once concluded that he alluded to some bargain with a neighbor.

"Don't you see the chair there, father?" asked Rebecca; for the old man stood still as a statue before the table, though his daughter had just placed his seat at his elbow, and now he sat down without speaking a word.

Why, husband, I do believe you're deaf to night! You haven't taken your hat off," exclaimed Mrs. Palmer.

"Don't, wife, don't;" and the old man laid his straw hat on the floor beside him.

The two women bent their heads reverently over the board, waiting for the deacon to invoke his customary blessings upon the meal, but no sound broke the stillness.

Mrs. Palmer glanced up at her husband His head, too, was bent over his plate; and a stream of candle-light falling on his face, revealed it fally to her gaze.

"John, something has happened to you to night," she said, leaning forward and breathlessly searching his face.

A deep convulsive sort of groan heaved out of the old man's lips, and both the women grew white as they heard it.

"Oh, what is it, father? do tell us!" fluttered up the frightened voice of Rebecca.

Mrs. Palmer rose and went to her husband and laid her shaking fingers on his hard hand.

"Oh, John, it ain't anything about Reuben?" She cried out the words as one might if a sword had struck suddenly into his heart.

Rebecca had set still at the table, her sweet face struck white with wonder and fear, and her brown eyes fastened on her parents; but now she sprang up, and dropped down on her knees at the deacon's feet: "Oh, father, do say it isn't Reuben!" and her voice was like her mother's. The deacon opened his lips, but could not speak. He took the hands of his wife and his child, and covered them with his own trembling ones. "Oh, Lord, have mercy on us! groaned the stricken man, and then they knew.

Mrs. Palmer crept up to her husband, and whispered in a faint, broken voice, "Jest say my boy isn't dead, father. I cann t bear to hear anything else."

And the deacon made no answer; but the great tears fell down his furrowed cheeks, and it was enough.

The tidings of the disastrous battle at Long Island, which closed the summer of 1776, had filled the land with mourning, for thousands of widows and orphans had been made in that terrible hour when so many brave Americans lay dead on the battle field, and the news of the successful skirmish which took place the following month near King's bridge, in New York, was everywhere hailed with gladness and gratitude, and the little village of Woodstock bore its part in the general rejoicing on that autumn night, when the stage first brought in the tidings.

The deacon's family was the only one in Woodstock to whom the news brought any sorrow, for it was in this engagement that Reuben had fallen. He was a great favorite throughout the village, and every heart was filled with sadness when it thought on that bright handsome face lying stark and rigid on the battle field.

It was late that evening when Parson Hunter entered the stricken house, for friends and neighbors feared to intrude on its awful grief. But the tender hearted old minister could not rest till he had carried the sweet balm of his love and faith into their broken hearts.

Parson Hunter was a tall, white-haired old man, a fine representative of the stanch old Puritan minister, but beneath some stateliness and austerity of manner beat a heart where were all fair and fragrant blossoms, and golden fruits of charity and love; a heart in whose pleasant and goodly paths the angels love to walk with their shining faces, and of whom they wrote, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The minister found the family in the kitchen where we left it utterly crushed down by grief, which expressed itself neither by moans nor tears.

Mrs. Palmer sat in the large arm-chair before the fire, where her husband had placed her, the crimson light fluttering over her face, which seemed frozen to stone, and her tearless eyes fastened in a blank gaze on the wall; and it was well, perhaps, that alarm for her reason or her life had somewhat diverted the thoughts of the deacon and his daughter from the dead to the living, though it seemed to the minister that the last hour had done the work of years on both of them.

"My friends," said the minister, speaking in his deep, solemn tones, "I should not have come into your house of mourning to-night, feeling that the Lord could speak to your hearts better than I, remembered that it was twenty-four years ago this very month when you brought Reuben up to the altar to dedicate him to his God, and I felt that I had a right and title to come." And these words unlocked Mrs. Palmer's face. She turned suddenly to the old man as the vision of that Sabbath morning rose and walked up its long path of years and stood before her.

"I see him! I see him!" she sobbed out, "with the little brown curls a dancin' round his face, and the merry brown eyes blinkin' under them. My little Reuben! he was the sweetest baby that ever gladdened a mother's heart, and I was so proud of him, and I thought God would spare him to be the staff of his mother's old age, because I had given all the others to him. Oh, Parson Hunter, it can't be true that I shall never look into his face again, never hear the sound of his voice! that he's lyin off there on the battle-field, and his mother was not there to smooth away the hair from his forehead, or give him one kiss when he looked up for her face for the last time!"

The old man sat still, overwhelmed by this mighty burst of a mother's agony. He closed his eyes for the tears that filmed them, and felt that for her he had neither help nor consolation.

"The Lord gave; and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

The low solemn tones of the preacher, scarcely above a whisper, fell into the hearts of the hearers and stilled them, as man's never could, as only God's can. Blessed Bible, words which we read over in the morning lesson and evening service, and never know the fullness and richness, the depths of meaning there are in them, till some awful sorrow of our own touches the springs, and then we go in, and lo! these old familiar passages are like stately rooms resting on massive pillars, and garnished and adorned with all fair and beautiful things; or they arise before us like gardens filled with trees, whose branches are burdened with gold and purple fruits, whose winds are full of the breath of sweet flowers, and whose silence is stirred by the voice of soft falling waters; amid which the soul may walk and be refreshed.

Oh, reader, for you, too, sooner or later, must come this time when all earthly help shall fail you—when no human words can be of avail or healing to you, and in those silent and awful sorrows, when only the voice of God can speak to the heart, you too may find what it is to have the windows of the promises opened, and your soul shall sit down under their blessed shadows and be healed.

Days passed away. A young man walked along the country road slowly and wearily, leaning upon a stout oak staff; his face was ghastly white, and he wore the blue uniform of the Continentals." He had a terrible wound in his right shoulder, and had been left on the battle field for dead. He opened the back gate softly, and gazed all about him—at the wood pile in one corner of the great yard near the sunflower stalks, and the small quince trees, which grew on one side of the old brown homestead of Deacon Palmer.

Suddenly the kitchen door opened, and Rebecca Palmer came out of the door with a tin basin in her hand, and the man's heart leaped as he heard her say, in her quick way;

"Never mind sprinklin' them clothes, mother, I'll attend to it as soon as I've hunted up a few o' them winter pears to stew for supper," and he saw the light rapid figure hasten round the corner of the house to the old pear tree just in the edge of the pasture, which he remembered climbing so many times in his boyhood, and amid whose branches he had gathered the fated bird's nests every fall. He followed the quick figure stealthily, and stood still a moment just outside the bars, and she did not see him, for her back was turned, and she dropped down on the yellow grass, and was searching amid it for the fruit which the wind had shaken off.

"Becky, Becky, I say?"

She turned quickly, and as her eyes fell upon his face a ghastly palor crept over hers. She covered it with a shriek, not loud, for it seemed to lie for very terror in her throat.

"Why, Becky, do look up here! Now, havn't you got a better welcome than this for your brother when he's come back from the dead like?"

But she cowered closer down in the grass, and moaned and shivered like leaves in the old pear tree.

"See here, now, what on earth ails you? If you take me for a spirit, jest look up and I'll be able to convince you I'm honest flesh and blood yet."

He lifted her up with one arm, for she was too weak betwixt fright and wonder to resist; but the old familiar hearty tones half assured her.

She lifted her face from her hands and looked at her brother a moment with a strained, wild glance; then the glad truth broke into her heart, for the hazel eyes had their roguish glance, though they were set in a pale, wasted face.

"Oh, Reuben, Reuben, I thought it was a ghost!" and she fell upon his neck with a wild sob of joy.

It was long before he could get her to talk rationally. She would throw her arms around his neck, and, hugging him tightly, murmur such tender words over him betwixt sobs and laughter, as Reuben Palmer had not heard since he lay a babe in his mother's crib.

"You precious darlin' fellow, have you really come back to us alive? Bless your heart, how white and changed you are! Oh, Reuben, darlin, is it really you, or am I dreamin'?"

And at last she grew calmer, and was able to tell her brother of that terrible night when the awful tidings came of his death, and how they hadn't one of them smiled since, and how, though his mother tried to "tear up," every one who looked in her face could see that her heart was broken.

And then both the young man and the maiden sat down on the grass and wept as though they were little children.

At last Rebecca rose up. "Oh, what will mother say! You must come right into the house, Reuben- only p'rap's I'd better break it to her slow like, for she's weakly now, and the sudden joy might kill her. Oh, there's father!"

And they saw the old Deacon come slowly into the yard and alight from his horse just before the barn door, and remove the heavy bags of flour from the animal's back, for the old man had just returned from the mill.

"We'll go and tell him first. You just keep around the corner of the barn, and I'll break the news," cried Rebecca.

She came panting up to her father just as he was leading the horse into the barn.

"Oh, say, father, I want to tell you—something's happened!"

The old man turned and looked into the eager face of his daughter, and his son, standing a little way off, could see the change which the last two weeks had wrought in his face.

"Well, what is it my child?"

"You'll be so glad, father, and yet—I can't tell it. Oh, Reuben, do come here.

And he came out. "Father!"

The vague superstitions which almost all country people held at that period of ghosts who haunted their own homes and visits made by the dead to the living, at once suggested even to the well balanced mind of the deacon the possibility of his son's spirit returning to him.

He turned white as his child had done, but he did not speak, and Rebecca cried out. "Don't be afeared father. It isn't a ghost, but Ruben's own self, and he wasn't dead as we all thought."

One long, greedy glance, and the father knew his child.

"Oh, Reuben, my son Reuben, the Lord be praised!"

And the father and the son fell upon each other's necks, like Jacob and Joseph of old, and wept.

"We must break it to mother easy, children, or it'll sartain kill her for joy," said the old man, vigorously wiping his face with his pocket handkerchief.

So it was arranged that Deacon Palmer should go in and break the joyful tidings to his wife according to his best judgment.

The trio went up to the house; Deacon Palmer entered the kitchen, and his children stood just outside the door, where they could hear every word. Mrs. Palmer was slicing some apples into a wooden bowl. She did not look up as her husband entered; all these long weeks she had gone on with her household duties carefully and assiduously as ever, but with a face which grew more pale and patient every day—more like the faces over which the grasses grow and the winds walk.

"Well, Becky," she said, "I couldn't make out what had kept you You've been a heap o' time huntin' them pears."

All the life had gone out of her voice; it was as full of grief and patience as her face.

"It's me mother, not Becky; I've just got home from the mill, and I've heer'd good news."

"What kind o' news, father?" with scarcely a faint stir of interest.

"Ahem—well, this was from the army."

The old woman sighed. "Then the Lord's given us another victory over our enemy."

"Wall, not that exactly. It's somethin' that consarns us more nearly—somethin' that'll give you more joy, mother."

Poor old man! He was internally congratulating himself on the tact and discretion with which he had approached his subject; but he could not keep a tone of triumphant gladness out of his voice, and he was not astute enough for a woman's quick intuitions.

"John," she said, turning round and looking him full in the face—a look that fairly staggered him—"have you heard any thing about Reuben?"

"Wall, yes, it did consarn him—." He broke down here. "Reuben, come in and let your mother see for herself."

"Mother!"

She gave one long greedy look as his shadow fell over the threshold. She comprehended it all in that glance, and stretched out her arms as he rushed forward; but they only clutched at the air, for before she could gather him to her heart she had fallen to the floor. Her son that was dead was alive again, but the mother's joy was more than her heart could bear. But the color soon came to her faded cheeks, and at eventide on that happy day was heard in good Deacon Palmer's house the voice of praise and thanksgiving to Him who in his wisdom "taketh away, but in mercy "restoreth again."

The man who "left his traces in the sand" sold the balance of the harness.

Aerolites.

A writer in the Boston Traveller gives the following interesting account of the visits of aerolites to our world:

Aerolites, as the derivation of the word implies, are masses of stone, which descend to the earth from the regions of our atmosphere. They are always apparently enveloped in a swiftly moving fiery globe of considerable magnitude, which explodes with great noise, and hurls its stony contents over large tracks of our globe. In some instances the globe has passed into our atmosphere and out again without explosion and without leaving any residium. They are solitary in their flight, and their fall is confined to no geographical locality; nor do they descend from any particular regions of the heavens, pursue any common direction, or appear at any particular season of the year. They traverse, usually, large areas in the sky, and are visible for some time, and over a vast extent of territory.

So far as our knowledge of them extends, their appearance and course are wholly fortuitous. Meteors, with which aerolites are often confounded, are a class of natural phenomena entirely distinct from aerolites. They are commonly known as shooting stars, from their resemblance in color and magnitude to the fixed stars, from whence they appear to proceed. They are of regular periodical occurrence, descending in groups, sometimes in showers, and come from particular regions in the heavens. They are visible but for a very short time, describe but a small arc in the sky, and are seen over a very small extent of territory. They make no noise and leave no deposit. They are well known to be of a harmless character, and excite but little more curiosity in their appearance than the fallen snow-flakes.

But the terrific grandeur of a solitary aerolite moving with planetary velocity in our very midst, exploding with the noise of many thunders, and hurling "hail of iron globes" and stony masses over our globe, is calculated to awaken in the breast of every one feelings of awe, and a deep and abiding interest in these bodies. The destruction which they are calculated to produce, and the four memorable instances of mortals crushed to death in their fall, tinges their interest with feelings of melancholy and terror. The danger apprehended from cometary collision—bodies moving in strict obedience to an inexorable law, and of light and vapory substance generally—is nothing compared with the possibility of the descent of an aerolite at mid day, from a clear sky, carrying devastation in its course. No warning precedes its coming, and the swiftness of its descent precludes escape.

When it is considered that three-fourths of the surface of the globe is covered with water, into which these bodies may fall unnoticed, and without leaving any trace of their existence, their recorded numbers and the destruction they have produced on a limited part of its solid surface, may be considered comparatively great. The earlie-t recorded fall of aerolites is among the Chinese. From the year 644 before our era, to 333 after Christ, sixteen of these bodies are registered as having fallen; while the Greek and Roman authors mention only four during this period. The great mass which fell burning 465 B. C., on Ægos Potamos, is the most celebrated of antiquity. It is described as being as large as two mill stones, and Humboldt expresses an opinion that, notwithstanding the lapse of 2325 years, the Thracian aerolite mass may yet be found.

An aerolite in the beginning of the tenth century fell into the river at Narni, and projected four feet above the surface of the water like a huge rock; and a Mongolian tradition is extant, that a rock forty feet in height fell from Heaven on a plain near the great Yellow river in China. In 1803 a large aerolite exploded in Normandy, in France, and scattered thousands of its fragments over a region of thirty miles square.

Upwards of two hundred instances of the fall of these bodies in different parts of the world are recorded. It must be remarked that even the largest of the masses found, whether in ancient or modern times, are but fragments of the original before the explosion. They have been variously estimated in size, before bursting, from a few hundred feet to several miles. They approach, and even exceed the magnitude of the smallest of the asteroids, which is estimated at about five miles in diameter.

The aerolitic mass is usually warm, sometimes heated to a great degree, when it first falls. They all exhibit a general identity in external form, the character and color of the crust, and the chemical composition of their principal constituents, without regard to the epoch or the place of their descent. It is justly considered a singular and striking fact, that aerolites contain no new chemical element, but contain the same as found distributed in the crust of the earth. When first found they have a thin black brilliant coating, occasionally veined This peculiar color of the external crust was noticed by the ancients, and there is but one recorded instance where it was wanting. The interior of the mass is usually of a light gray color—the presence or absence of certain chemical elements, which compose these bodies, varying the degree of color.

Within the present century, three great aerolites have attracted the attention of the people of New England. The first, which exploded near Weston, Connecticut, Dec. 14, 1807, was the subject of elaborate calculation by the celebrated Dr. Bowditch, in its geometrical and numerical relations. The extreme limits of its real diameter was placed by Bowditch at five hundred feet for its least, and one half mile for its greatest diameter.

The largest limit is owing to the various estimates of its size from the places of observation, they being less reliable than its altitude and course. The aerolite moved over something more than one hundred and seven miles, during visibility, at a distance of eighteen miles from the earth's surface. Its velocity was about three miles per second. An explosion took place over Weston, and masses of stone fell, weighing about half a ton. This could have been but a very small part of the original, which must have continued on its course; and the observation at Weston, of its gradual disappearance, favors the idea. As its course was southerly, and nearly in the meridian of that place, the other fragments, if it descended, must have fallen into the ocean.

The next aerolite was seen all over New England on the evening of September 30, 1850, and is in some respects the most remarkable of any on record. It is sometimes known as the "Jenny Lind Meteor," on account of its existence, within the great dome of the Cambridge Observatory, being first made known by the illustrious vocalist turning suddenly and excitingly away from the great telescope, where she was viewing the planet Saturn, near which the aeroliteexploded. The sudden illumination of the field of the telescope, by the aerolite, was the cause of her surprise. The writer will never forget the startling effect of the sudden concentration of great light in the field of the comet-seeker with which he was exploring, at the time, a region of the heavens, quite remote from that in which the aerolite exploded. The astronomers of the observatory noted very exactly the place of explosion among the stars, and executed drawings of the wonderful radiance it left behind, which remained visible planet in different forms for more than an hour. Its course, in the east, was in a northerly direction. The Cambridge and Nantucket observations made its distance from the former place at the time of its explosion about one hundred miles, and fifty miles above the ocean. The duration of its light renders this aerolite memorable.

The third, and probably much the largest, was that which appeared on the evening of July 20, 1860. Its appearance in the early part of the evening was favorable for general observation; and it appears to have been seen from Montreal to Norfolk, Va., and from Detroit to Portland, Me. Its physical appearance in this vicinity was that of two separate *nuclei*, side by side, throwing off sparks which made a bright train of several degrees in length. It is somewhat remarkable that the usual phenomena of explosion was nowhere seen. This is sustained by the fact that as yet no noise was heard emanating from the aerolite. In all probability it passed on its planetary career. The approximate calculations of Prof. Bond, of Cambridge, and Dr. Perkins, of Newburyport, apparently based on different observations, concur in making its course nearly over the northern part of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and Long Island Sound, with a velocity of about 25 miles per second, at an elevation of 22 miles above the earth. The magnitude, velocity, and the course of this body will, undoubtedly, be very exactly ascertained from the great number of observations made on it during its visibility.

The phenomenon is usually so sudden and so startling, that it is gone before the observer thinks to note its place among the stars when first and last seen, and the time and duration of its appearance, which would furnish data for the calculation of the elements of its path, in connection with another distant place. Persons observing these bodies would greatly aid scientific men in their investigation of aerolites, if they would attend to the nothing of the above few simple facts.

Caprice of a Beautiful Marksman.—The Paris correspondent of the New York Express relates this singular story:

A young, beautiful and wealthy lady, widow of a French officer who lost his life at the assault of Malakoff, has chosen a second husband after a somewhat eccentic fashion, arising either from martial disposition, or the difficulty of a selection between no less than ten sighing aspirants for her hand. Madam C. invited the ten gentlemen to breakfast at her country villa, and having thus united her suitors, informed them that she would unite herself to that one of them who would consent to hold in his hand a watch for her to fire at and break with a pistol, at twenty paces. Nine of the party didn't care to run the risk exacted by this female Travis, but the tenth, a young merchant, courageously determined to fulfil the condition imposed. Madam C. loaded her pistol forthwith, and stepped into the garden followed by the company. The twenty paces were measured, the mercantile hero pulled out his watch, gallantly refusing one not much larger than a franc, offered by the lady, and fearlessly assumed his place. The amazon took deliberate aim; bang! went the pistol, and down tumbled the watch, pierced to the cap. The gentleman, unharmed by the adventure, has married the rich widow and bought a new time piece.

London and its Growth.—The city of London, says the Registrar General, now covers 121 square miles. It is equal to three Londons of 1800. It increases in population at the rate of one thousand a week, half by births (their excess over deaths) and half by immigration (their excess over emigration.) If is remarkable that at London one in six of those who leave the world dies in one of the public institutions—a workhouse, hospital, asylum or prison. Nearly one in eleven of the deaths are in a workhouse.

Fanny Fern comes to the conclusion that a woman is better without than with male relatives. "If," she says, you have a husband that won't support you, your father won't help you because you are married, and your uncle won't help you because you've got a father and brothers, and your cousins won't help you because you've got plenty of uncles, and nobody else will help one whom husband, father, brothers, uncles and cousins surround."

Let the youth who stands at the bar with a glass of liquor in his hand, consider which he had better throw away—the liquor or himself.

Tall Corn.

We grow "tall corn" in America. The world in beginning to find it out. Every year brings the fact more and more home to the perceptive and digestive faculties of all civilized humanity. Like all great truths, it did not gain credit at once. True, everybody sees it here with his own eyes, but not so on the other side of the water. The first accounts of the productiveness of our western prairies were read by our Buckinghamshire farmers with about as much respect as the fish stories of the sailor Sinbad. It took even the highest dignitaries of the land a long while to get fairly up to a level with the actual fact. Even at this day there is an ear of corn in the British Museum which enjoys a very distinguished consideration as a curiosity. It divides attention, we do not say equally, but certainly fractionally, with the Ninevah Bull and the great Kohinoor. It is a perfect marvel to our cousin John Bull; and yet it has but a very simple history, and it is not a very extraordinary ear of corn after all. It reached its present distinction something in this wise:

In the month of January, 1847, at a certain dinner party in London, at which Lord John Russell, Lord Morpeth and many other distinguished men were present, the conversation turned upon the Irish famine; and the remark was made by Lord John that he rejoiced that so good a substitute for the native breadstuff had been found as Indian corn. Turning to Mr Bates, American partner in the house of Baring Brothers, his lordship went on to say:

"Why, Bates, some of the cobs have twelve or fourteen rows of grain on them."

Mr. Bates coolly replied:

"Yes, my lord, I have seen from twenty to twenty-four rows on a cob."

"That is a rare Yankeeism," was the pleasant retort of the Premier; and the whole company shouted in approval.

The burst of merriment over, Mr. Bates bought his peace by a wager of a dinner for the company all round that he could produce such an ear.

"Done!" exclaimed Lord John; and the bet was clinched.

The dinner passed off. Mr. Bates returned home, but not entirely at ease. He had done a strange thing; for the first time in his life he had made an engagement he was not absolutely certain of his ability to fulfil. He had misgivings that he had rashly pledged the honor of his country. It had been long since he looked upon an American crib; and however patiently he winnowed the *corn*-ucopia of his memory, he found that the cobs of his early days had gone glimmering through the lapse of time among the things that were now so far off that he could not count the rows. He was as Plautus would say, *redactus ad inritas*—in Yankee parlance, hard up." But Fortune favors the brave. It happened that a friend of ours dropped in next day at the counting house of the Barings. Mr. Bates, with brightening face, hailed him, and made known his difficulty.

"You are safe," was the response; "if I live to get home you shall have even a bigger ear than you have promised."

Our friend G——— soon returned, and straightway wrote to Messrs. Rogers and Reynolds, of Lafayette, Indiana, telling the story, and begging them, for the honor of the country, to come to the rescure, and turn the tables on Lord John, showing them what Yankees could do.

In July following Mr. G——— received by express from Lafayette a nicely arranged box, containing six ears of horse tooth corn, two of which had twenty-nine rows, two *thirty-one* and two thirty two. The box was forthwith addressed to "J. Bates, Esq.; care of Messrs. Baring, Brothers & Co. shipped by Black Ball Line, care of the Liverpool House." It reached its destination, and Lord John Russell, first Lord of the Treasury, third son of the late Duke of Bedford by the second daughter of George Viscount Torrington, and lineal descendant of Lord William Russell, the martyr of Liberty, "*acknowledged the corn.*"

The dinner was won. Joshua Bates did not perpetrate a "Yankeeism, and the British Museum holds the trophy. *Vive la Republique!*

Miss Patterson.—A matter rather singular forcibly impressed itself upon me some weeks ago, but I neglected noticing it up to the present time. Passing along our streets the next day after the announcement of the death of Prince Jerome Bonaparte, I saw his wife—Miss Patterson—now near her eightieth year, walking out in her usual costume, unconcerned as if nothing had happened. She certainly knew the fact; but knowing her eccentricities I was not surprised. It is no uncommon thing to see this venerable lady in the public marts attending personally to business. She often collects her own rents, and takes a flirt at stock speculations when she fever is up. At all times, an elegant crown jewel, glittering with diamonds of the purest water, is displayed upon her forehead, whilst her arms are white, skin smooth and tender as a maiden of sixteen. She is really a remarkable woman. There is a deep stoicism and unbending philosophy, coupled with independence in her composition, which one out of a thousand, male or female, does not possess. Her every thought is replete with favoritism for royalty. Republics she esteems commonly grateful; and now, though a citizen of our domain, and without anything special to claim herself upon touching imperial favor, she lives in the ideal of *la belle* France. Her greatest ambition is to hear of her grandson—young Jerome—now in the French army, rising to honor and imperial distinction. A large portion of her annual income, which is large, is appropriated to his service. At her demise, it is presumed, he will inherit her entire fortune, as she is not on terms of intimacy with her son here.

Baltimore Cor. New York Times.

Life is sunshine or gloom, just as you choose to have it appear.